

James Hicks and Ian Whiteside sprang the surprises at Braintree Table Tennis League's annual individual tournament – and both were at the expense of the higher ranked Ian Hayden.

Hayden was seeded to appear in both the men's singles semi finals and the veterans' singles final at tomorrow (Thu) evening's finals night, but fell short on both counts.

Hayden was seeded equal third in the men's singles and seemed to be on the way to his third semi final in four years when he led Whiteside by two games to one in their quarter final.

But Whiteside's renowned fighting spirit took over and he knuckled down to take the fourth game 11-9.

Hayden was still well placed when he changed ends in the final game only 5-4 down, but he failed to gain another point, leaving Whiteside to take his place in his sixth semi final and his first for ten years.

His reward will be a meeting with the younger Hayden, No.2 seed Peter, who made his way to the last four with a series of relatively straightforward victories.

In the other half, reigning champion Paul Davison secured his semi final place with a four-game win over Larte Lawson.

The remaining quarter final brought together equal No.3 seed Kevin Gowlett and his surprise conqueror of last season, Trevor Carter. But there was to be no repeat this time, Gowlett easing through in three straight games.

Ian Hayden's defeat in the veterans' singles was part of a superb run by the unseeded Hicks who also knocked out No.3 seed Steve Pennell. Hayden was dispatched 12-14, 11-6, 11-3, 11-9 while Pennell fell 11-3, 9-11, 11-5, 11-8.

Like Whiteside, Hicks's finals night appearance will also be against the other Hayden who came through all three opponents in straight games.

The one event where Ian Hayden got it right was in the men's doubles where he made it to the final with the help of his brother.

The Haydens, winners of the event in 2007, came past Larte and Philip Lawson in straight games and in the final will face last year's winners Davison and Gowlett who beat Carter and Scott Dowsett also in straight games.

Carter's moment of triumph came on the Friday night when he won the first individual trophy in his 38 years in the game.

After a back-to-the-wall performance he took the over 50s title with a five-game win over Pennell.

After losing the first game, he was 7-1 down in the second and 10-6 down in the third but clambered back to win both. He lost the fourth but held on to take the final end at 11-7.

Players at the other end of the age scale impressed in the handicap singles where Warren Baines, 14, beat 12-year-old Oliver Hicks in the final, both players playing off the same handicap.

The two will face each other again on finals night in the cadets' singles.

Baines also secured the handicap doubles where he and Sean Clift beat Stuart Ascott and Tim Huxtable in three straight games in the final.

The restricted singles and divisional singles will all be played out on finals night and Sible Hedingham players will feature in two of them.

Curiously Roy Hooper and Graham Cannon both lost to their teammate Mark Brown in the restricted but Hooper came through as runner-up in his group and went on to beat No.1 seed Tom Elder, probably worn out after his five-game marathon against Cannon in his group, and Huxtable in the semi final.

Brown beat Cannon at the other end of the draw but went on to lose to Nomads' Kevin Saunders who will face Hooper in the final.

Cannon makes his appearance in the division two final, a year after reaching the division three final.

He wore down Saunders in the semi final and will face Adam Pitt, winner over Notley C teammate Lyndon Griffiths in a fluctuating semi final 11-5, 7-11, 11-7, 11-13, 11-9.

Given his form in the veterans' singles, it was perhaps no surprise to see James Hicks come through to the division one singles final.

He came past Laurie Sapiano, Elder and Carter, all in straight games, and faces last year's restricted singles winner Ryan Pitt in the final. Pitt had an 11-8, 11-7, 11-9 win over Larte Lawson in his semi final.

Two former division four finalists will contest the division three singles. Stuart Ascott, who won in 2004, came past Mike Pitt to face Adam Clift, runner-up in 2008, who beat Steve Ascott in his semi final.

Last year's runner-up Adam Pitt went one better this time in the boys' singles where he won a round robin against Baines and Hicks.

The consolation singles was won by Gordon Fairchild who beat Cannon 11-8 in the fifth in the final.